

# Keeping Downtown Open and Livable During Construction

The Alaskan Way Viaduct is a critical transportation corridor in the middle of a dense city—that means whether we build a cut-and-cover tunnel or a new elevated structure, keeping downtown open for business and livable for residents will be tough. Construction on SR 99 is expected to start in two years. This may seem like a long time away, but for a project this big—it is just around the corner. The viaduct is a priority, as it is a matter of public safety and a corridor of regional and national significance. We cannot delay. Inside you'll read about how the plan to manage construction impacts on downtown businesses and residents is being developed and some of the ideas being considered. None of the ideas are set in stone. They must be vetted through Seattle citizens, and WSDOT and the City of Seattle must test them for viability.

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# Overview



## Keeping Downtown Open During Construction

Whether we build a cut-and-cover tunnel or a new elevated structure, construction of a viaduct replacement will be difficult. Businesses and residents near the viaduct are concerned about the impacts of construction, including more difficult access, loss of nearby parking, construction noise, dust and vibration. Businesses in downtown Seattle want customers and employees to still be able to get to and move around the area. WSDOT and the City of Seattle are working now on plans to minimize impacts on downtown businesses and residents.

There is more work to do before finalizing these plans. We are coordinating with other agencies, meeting with businesses, residents and property owners, and studying what has worked well elsewhere in the country in order to develop the optimal mitigation package. Over the next year, we'll be looking for your comments on whether our ideas will help, if you have other ideas we should consider, and how you would be affected during construction. In the meantime, this booklet tells you how the plan is being developed and gives you a sampling of some of the ideas that may be included in the plan.

### What issues do our plans address?

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- Maintaining access for residents and businesses
- Maintaining traffic mobility for people and freight
- Providing temporary parking

# Getting prepared

## WSDOT and the City of Seattle are

**preparing two plans:** a Business Mitigation Plan and a Residential Mitigation Plan. Together, these plans will outline specific programs and projects that work together to minimize the construction impacts on businesses and residents near the viaduct and in the greater downtown area.

Each plan will identify specific strategies for addressing the impacts identified in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), including air quality, noise, economics, land use, transportation, access, dust, and parking. Over time, the plans will be fine-tuned to address businesses with unique characteristics, such as water-dependent businesses on the central waterfront. Elements of the plan will be reviewed with downtown stakeholders over the next year and the mitigation plans will be included in the Final EIS to be published in late 2007.

Mitigation measures and plans will continue to be updated through the life of the project. Compliance with the terms of the mitigation plans will also be continually monitored during construction.

## What can you do to be prepared?

- **Stay informed.** Use the project Web site to get the latest information.
- **Stay involved.** Work with the project team in the development of mitigation strategies to minimize impacts.
- **Stay flexible.** Consider other options for getting around downtown.

## Construction Plans Under Review

Three construction plans are evaluated in the Supplemental Draft EIS: a shorter plan, an intermediate plan, and a longer plan. Either the cut-and-cover tunnel or the new elevated structure could be built with these three plans.

### There are trade-offs between the three plans:

- Maintaining traffic on SR 99 and locally results in a longer construction schedule
- We also need to strike a balance between overall project costs and construction duration

There will be significant construction impacts in the project corridor, regardless of the replacement alternative or the construction plan. We are looking for your feedback on these potential mitigation measures. By working together now, we will be prepared for construction.





# What ideas are being considered?

The project will work with the downtown community to develop and evaluate ideas for helping downtown Seattle make it through construction. A summary of the types of ideas being considered is below and more specific ideas are included on the following pages. These ideas may change over time as our work tells us some are not effective. New ideas may be given to us by the public, our partner agencies, or elected officials.

**We will get people to downtown during construction.** A Construction Transportation Management Plan is being prepared and a draft will be available for public review later this year. With over 100 ideas developed to date, this plan will address a number of elements including transit, traffic operations, traveler information, freight, emergency response, transportation demand management and parking. More information on the plan being developed and the initial ideas being considered is included in “Keeping People and Freight Moving During Construction.”

**We will provide parking.** We know it’s important to provide parking downtown for shoppers, workers and visitors. Approximately 3,700 parking spaces may have to be removed during construction because of construction staging and transportation management requirements. We are looking for locations for additional short-term parking, particularly in Pioneer Square and the central waterfront area. Parking will also be provided north and south of downtown, which will include shuttle access into downtown.

**We will help people get around downtown.** We know it is inconvenient to not be able to reach a business or home in the usual manner, and there will be times when access will be modified or restricted. We will work with businesses and residences in advance to develop alternate routes that still provide adequate access. As construction occurs, temporary access may be provided with adequate signage and pathways. Construction will be coordinated so that this inconvenience is minimized, and communication to affected parties will ensure everyone is aware of the changes well before they occur.

**Downtown will still be livable.** We know construction is happening literally in some people’s backyards and in front of businesses. We will keep the construction area clean and secure, so that downtown Seattle is still a great place to visit, work, and live. For example, dust from construction and demolition activities will be minimized using best practices, such as watering down the construction site and surrounding areas.

We’ve learned a lot from other large projects in Seattle and around the country about how to control construction noise. Construction noise mitigation will be developed in part through the City of Seattle’s Noise Variance process. The project team will prepare a draft noise variance application that will be available for public review in 2007. Potential strategies for keeping noise levels down include temporary noise barriers or curtains around equipment or work areas, equipping construction engines with adequate mufflers, and minimizing vibrations.

**We will help businesses make it through construction.** We have been meeting with businesses to hear about their construction-related concerns and to get ideas on how we can help them make it through construction. We will continue to work with them on issues such as employee access and delivery schedules. Additionally, the project will create and support opportunities to encourage people to shop downtown during construction, by providing incentives and sponsoring events. We will also work to make it easy for people to find businesses by providing signage and temporary sidewalks.

**We will ensure that everyone, from customers to employees to residents, knows what’s going on.** A key component of all of our plans is an intensive and interactive communications strategy, including a construction hotline that will provide rapid responses and quick resolution of identified problems. We will maintain ongoing communications with affected businesses and residents to make sure that everyone has the information they need.

# Keeping Downtown Open During Construction



Downtown Seattle has undergone a dramatic revitalization over the last ten years, which promises to continue. More than 30 new residential towers are planned for construction in the near future, and 22,000 more people and 50,000 new jobs are expected by 2020. Replacing the viaduct provides a critical transportation corridor that supports this growth, and we are committed to minimizing the impacts of construction, to the extent possible, for the people and businesses already here.

## What are some of our ideas?

**Major transportation improvements are already underway.** Downtown will remain open during construction. The first step is ensuring that residents can reach their downtown homes, and employees and customers can make it to businesses on the waterfront. Already, projects are underway to improve access to downtown Seattle. These include:

**Link Light Rail.** By 2009, a 30-minute light rail ride will carry passengers from downtown Seattle to SeaTac Airport and back. Trains will leave every six minutes during rush hour, and every 10 to 15 minutes during midday and evening hours. Not only will this provide an easy way for downtown residents to get to the airport, but it will quickly bring visitors to Seattle directly to the downtown core.

**South Lake Union Streetcar.** Connecting one of Seattle's fastest growing neighborhoods to the Westlake transit hub, the streetcar will be operating by the end of 2007 and carry 300,000 people a year.

**Seattle Connections.** In partnership with bus service providers, the City of Seattle has adopted a plan to guide transit investment for the next 25 years. The goal of this plan is to connect our neighborhoods and ultimately provide service every 15 minutes, 18 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Center City Access Strategy.** Over 20 projects have been identified to remove choke points into the downtown area. Proposed projects are as small as creating a short transit lane on First Avenue near Denny and as large as widening the Spokane Street Viaduct and creating a Two-Way Mercer Street. The City of Seattle is currently securing funding for these projects so that the most critical projects are in place before viaduct construction begins.

**Smart permitting standards.** The City of Seattle is developing a mapping system that can be used by the public and the city to coordinate permitting, which will decrease the chance of traffic impacts. This system will be in place before viaduct construction begins.

**The Transportation Connection Shop.** King County Metro, the Downtown Seattle Association and City of Seattle opened this center in 2005. It is a place where transportation plans for businesses—with incentives to reduce the number of people driving alone—are developed, King County Metro bus passes are sold, and SDOT's Center City Construction Coordination Program resides.

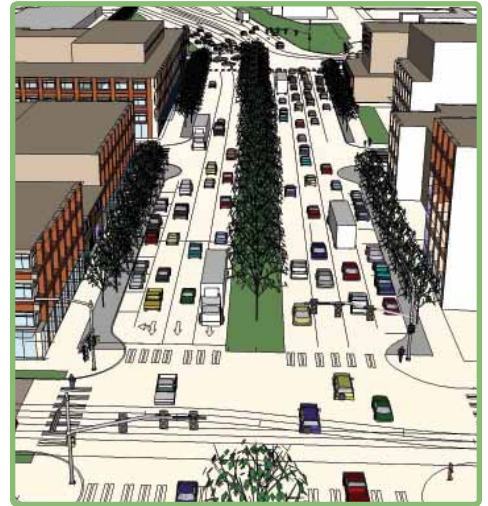
**Two-Way Mercer Street.** Expected to be one of the main routes used by freight during construction and the connection to the Seattle Center, the project is now being designed so that construction can begin mid-2008. The easier it is for regional trips to use Mercer Street, the less likely they will use downtown city streets or the Alaskan Way corridor during construction of the viaduct replacement.

**Construction Transportation Management Plan.** WSDOT and the City of Seattle are developing a plan to ensure that people and freight keep moving during construction. More than 100 ideas have been considered so far, and the project team will be looking for public feedback as we get closer to construction. Some of the strategies in the plan would have special benefits for those trying to get downtown. For example, the Elliott Bay water taxi service could be extended so that larger ships run the entire year from West Seattle to downtown. The water taxi may have a pedestrian link to First Avenue. Additionally, the route of the water taxi could be extended to waterfront piers, the Seattle Aquarium, the cruise ship terminal, Port of Seattle, and Pier 70/Olympic Sculpture Park.

The City of Seattle will modify some of the downtown streets to improve circulation and provide additional routes for traffic. Downtown's many one-way streets sometimes make it difficult for traffic to move through the area. Modifying the circulation patterns in downtown Seattle will improve traffic flow and make it easier for people to get in and out of the area.

Sound Transit's successful Shop, Dine and Ride program or a similar program could continue to offer incentives for transit riders to shop and eat downtown during construction. This program will allow shoppers to have purchases delivered to their homes, minimizing the need to drive a car downtown. The incentives will help downtown Seattle remain an attractive place to shop and eat during construction.

Information on additional transportation strategies being considered to keep downtown traffic moving can be found in "Keeping People and Freight Moving During Construction."





# Providing Parking During Construction



Downtown Seattle has undergone a dramatic revitalization. It has become a major regional destination for tourists and the downtown retail core is thriving. Both retail owners and employers downtown are interested in maintaining downtown as a great place to visit and work. Part of that is making sure that when people do have to drive to downtown, there are places for them to park.

## What are some of our ideas?

### **Replace lost parking in downtown**

**Seattle.** WSDOT and the City of Seattle are considering leasing, purchasing or constructing off-street parking to address the potential loss of on-street short-term parking from the project's central segment. This parking would assist drivers in areas where off-street parking is currently at or near capacity or where business districts (such as Pioneer Square and the waterfront) rely heavily on on-street metered parking.

### **Increase enforcement of parking**

**regulations.** Short-term, on-street parking not directly impacted by the project will be monitored by parking enforcement officers to ensure that spaces are available at regular intervals. This will increase space turnover, a helpful strategy for businesses.

### **Convert long-term parking to short-term and carpool parking.**

The City of Seattle is working with parking operators, property owners and businesses to develop and implement parking strategies

that will include conversions of long-term parking to short-term or carpool parking. Message signs will direct drivers to parking lots with vacancies, minimizing the need to drive around searching for a place to park. Employees who will need parking for longer intervals will be encouraged to use new park-and-ride lots and transit.

### **Provide additional park-and-ride**

**capacity.** We may lease new lots and add parking spaces at well-served park-and-ride locations, such as Northgate. We will also identify underutilized lots that could be used for downtown visitors. For example, excess capacity in Seattle Center lots could be used as park-and-ride spaces during workday hours.

### **Designate construction worker parking.**

Parking locations for construction workers will be designated and reserved so that workers are not taking up visitor parking in downtown. The parking will likely be located outside of the downtown core, with transportation provided to and from the construction site.



# Helping People Get Around Downtown



Downtown Seattle has become a hub of activity. Visitors and residents shop at places like Westlake Center and Pacific Place, see a movie or eat out at one of our many restaurants. We will work to ensure that those who are downtown can still get around.

## What are some of our ideas?

**Coordinate closures.** We will schedule closures of sidewalks and streets to minimize impacts to business activities to the extent possible. We will be especially mindful of seasonal or high-sales periods, so that downtown Seattle remains a great destination for shoppers.

**Keep access disruptions to a minimum.** We will minimize the duration of modified or lost access to businesses to the extent possible. Construction that restricts access to a business will occur from time to time and then move down the corridor, minimizing the inconvenience to any one business for the total construction time. When disruptions occur, we will provide temporary signage, pedestrian walkways, and other tools to ensure people know how to reach stores, places of employment, and their homes.

**Provide pedestrian paths and signs.** There will be several safe dedicated pedestrian pathways between First Avenue and the central waterfront, with signage, directional arrows, lighting, and other amenities to keep the waterfront easily accessible. Several overwater pedestrian bridges are being considered to link the central waterfront piers. This will provide

pedestrian access between Colman Dock, Piers 54, 55, 56, 57, and the Seattle Aquarium.

**Maintain sidewalk capacity.** When possible, sidewalks on key downtown streets will remain open on sites adjacent to construction. Things that block pedestrian mobility or restrict access will be eliminated, including signs, vending machines, and street furniture. Objects that do have to remain on the street will be permitted and carefully monitored, to ensure that pedestrians can move easily through these areas.

## **Integrate communication and design teams in construction planning.**

Communication and design experts will be involved in the development of construction contracts so that contractors are required to maintain access to critical areas and businesses, to the extent feasible.

**Create temporary loading zones.** Some parking spaces may be converted to temporary loading zone spaces to provide delivery access as close to affected businesses as possible.

# Keeping Downtown Livable During Construction



People live and work downtown 24 hours a day, which means at times people will be trying to sleep and concentrate while construction happens around them. Noise is just one of the impacts from construction that we know will affect everyone in close proximity to the construction zone.

## What are some of our ideas?

### **Develop a noise management plan.**

WSDOT and the City of Seattle will develop a construction noise management and monitoring plan that establishes specific noise levels. This will set standards so that downtown residents and workers will know the maximum noise levels they can expect to hear.

**Monitor noise impacts.** Noise levels will be monitored during construction so that issues can be responded to immediately, sometimes even before it becomes a complaint. If noise levels become unacceptable, residents and business owners will be able to call a hotline with noise complaints. Complaints will be responded to within a set period of time.

### **Block noise at construction sites.**

The contractor will be required to use noise barriers or curtains around stationary equipment and long-term work areas that are close to residents. These barriers will keep noise to a minimum and protect the surrounding area from other impacts of construction.

### **Limit loud activities to daytime hours.**

The contractor may be required to limit the noisiest construction activities to between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. on weekdays and between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. on weekends and/or holidays. A noise variance will be required for construction between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. on weekdays and 10 p.m. and 9 a.m. on weekends.

### **Make smart choices about equipment.**

The contractor will be required to use construction equipment mindfully and courteously. This will include turning off construction equipment during prolonged periods of non-use, maintaining equipment and training equipment operators, and where possible, locating stationary equipment away from sensitive properties.

**Muffle construction equipment.** Beyond using the quietest equipment available, the contractor will also be required to use adequate mufflers, intake silencers, and engine enclosures.

**Use quieter back-up alarms.** One of the most irritating noises produced in construction projects are the loud and sustained ‘beeps’ from equipment back-up alarms. The contractor will be required to use something similar to the OSHA-approved ambient sound-level sensing backup alarms. These alarms provide the necessary safety alerts for nearby workers while minimizing the sound levels reaching adjacent residences and offices.

**Communicate information to the public.** When possible, nearby residents and businesses will be notified prior to periods of intense nighttime construction. This will give people a chance to make other arrangements for activities that may be disrupted by loud noises.

**Upgrade window soundproofing.** Where appropriate, the project team may provide heavy window coverings or other temporary soundproofing material on adjacent buildings for noise-sensitive locations.

**Upgrade HVAC systems.** The project team will work with adjacent building owners and may upgrade their air circulation systems to minimize noise being carried through vents to offices or residences.

**Minimize vibrations.** Impact pile driving, a major noise and vibration source on construction projects, will only be used in isolated instances—if at all. In order to minimize noise and vibration from pile driving, the project team is looking at alternate pile driving methods and materials. For example, using vibrating hammers instead of impact hammers.

**Monitor vibrations.** The contractor will be required to monitor vibrations at historic structures or sensitive receivers nearest to construction activities. The monitoring data will be analyzed to ensure that ground vibration levels do not exceed the damage risk criteria for historic and non-historic buildings.







# Helping Downtown Businesses Make It Through Construction

Downtown Seattle's business community is thriving. Whether it is global headquarters for Fortune 500 companies or local shops catering to a niche market, downtown businesses serve as the engine of the Pacific Northwest economy. Helping businesses make it through construction so they can enjoy the benefits of a new SR 99 is critical to the success of the project and the overall viability of the City of Seattle and region.

## What are some of our ideas?

### **Create a business assistance program.**

A business assistance program will create one point of contact for businesses to communicate their concerns with project managers and construction supervisors. In turn, project staff will ensure businesses have access to information and staff with decision-making authority during potentially disruptive times of construction.

**Provide technical assistance.** Experts will provide technical assistance to affected businesses to help them operate during potentially disruptive portions of the project. This assistance will provide more specialized service than the project's other communication efforts. For example, the program could help a business update their Web site, create advertising circulars, and identify incentives that will keep customers coming downtown. Special Small Business Enhancement Program grants may be awarded to help finance this assistance, from consultation to individual businesses regarding displays, inventory and financing to programs that address the marketing efforts of a neighborhood as a whole.

**Consider relocations.** The project will work with businesses that will be significantly affected by construction and that may want to consider relocation during construction. After all efforts are made to mitigate impacts, it may be more effective to relocate a business. The project will provide businesses with information to make this decision and then help owners

through the process if relocation is the appropriate option.

**Minimize obstructions.** The project will work with the contractors to minimize navigational obstructions or delays in the routes to reach businesses, homes, cruise ships and ferry terminals, and waterfront attractions. This will include signage and temporary sidewalks and access points.

**Shop and eat locally.** The project will obtain supplies from local businesses when possible and encourage contractors to patronize businesses during construction. The contractor will also be asked to encourage workers to eat at local restaurants. For example, there may be a lunch bus to take staff to local restaurants.

**Sponsor local events.** The project team will support events downtown and on the waterfront. These events might include cookouts, festivals, street fairs, or sidewalk sales, with activities, prizes and treats to draw people to the waterfront. Event dates, times and other relevant information will be advertised on the construction Web page, and on informational materials.

**Publish a business directory.** Information will be provided to customers about which businesses are open and how to get there. This information will be provided in print and on the Web site.

# Keeping the Public Informed During Construction



Knowing what is going on with construction is the best way for people to be prepared and able to adapt or change their travel patterns. As part of the Business and Residential Mitigation Plans, we are developing a strategy to communicate information to the public during construction, and we will be looking for your comments to ensure the plans work.

## What are some of our ideas?

**Establish a 24-hour hotline.** A phone number will be established so that residents and businesses near the construction zone will be able to call with questions or concerns about how construction is happening. Callers will receive an initial response within a set period of time, day or night.

**Deploy project ambassadors.** Prior to and during major changes in construction or access routes, ambassadors from the project team will be on downtown streets, giving information, directions, and answering questions from the public.

**Publish a regular newsletter and send regular emails.** A newsletter will be provided to residents and businesses within a certain distance of the construction zone. The newsletter will provide timely information to neighborhood residents, business owners, public agencies, and interested parties. The newsletter will also be available electronically to those that want to email it to employees. A regular email will also be distributed.

## **Hold coffee hours with the contractor.**

Project team members will be available for those people interested in the project to stop by and ask questions. This will give downtown businesses and residents direct access to the construction team so they understand potential impacts on the community and can make real-time adjustments if able.

## **Maintain a construction Web site.**

The project Web site will provide real-time construction information, schedules, and public participation opportunities. During construction, the Web site will offer a live construction WebCam, a map of the corridor indicating where businesses are open, detour information, and where to find parking. The Web site will also feature a construction blog, updated several times each day.

**Publish parking maps.** The project will regularly publish maps of where parking is available and whether it is short- or long-term on the Web site and in printed form for downtown visitors.



**Set up mobile kiosks.** Mobile kiosks will be set up in strategic locations throughout downtown to provide information like sidewalk maps, coupons to businesses, and other materials about construction, transit routes and traffic detours.

**Conduct tours and construction-centered events.**

Neighbors and members of the community will be invited to participate in tours to help them understand the construction process and anticipate construction activities. Options will include guided or self-guided walking tours, boat tours, bus tours, or bus/walking tours with lunch at a restaurant in the project corridor. We are also exploring educational opportunities to invite students, visitors and interested parties to see construction milestones up-close and learn about the specific techniques used to build the replacement.

**Establish a Construction Visitor Center.** Visitors, local business people and residents will be able to go to a Construction Visitor Center to obtain information about the project, voice concerns about construction, or see a model or visual simulation of the completed project. In addition, visitors could view displays to learn about Native American heritage, and how the natural habitat will benefit from the project. There may also be space for attending meetings with project staff, or for housing rentable centers for other services. Washington State Ferries could sell ferry tickets, Metro could sell bus tickets, or restaurants could take dinner reservations.



**Host Community Partnership Forums.** The project team will host Community Partnership Forums to allow the project team to offer status reports, discuss issues, and solicit feedback from the community.



# What are the next steps for these ideas?

- We are looking for your comments on whether these ideas are helpful or if there are other ideas we should consider. Send an email to [viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov).
- These ideas will be evaluated and prioritized as a group to determine if they will be effective, what they will cost, or if additional projects or programs are needed.
- Some ideas must be included in permit applications. For example, the City of Seattle must approve a noise variance program and the plan for noise mitigation.
- The business and residential mitigation plans will be included in the Final EIS.

## Getting ready for construction:

### Developing the Residential and Business Mitigation Plans

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<p>Develop a proposed menu of mitigation options</p> <p>Work with downtown businesses and residents to refine the options</p> <p>Analyze the effectiveness of the options</p>	<p>Refine mitigation options and priorities</p> <p>Continue to work with downtown businesses and residents on the mitigation strategies and priorities</p> <p>Include mitigation strategies in Final EIS</p>	<p>Begin to implement high priority programs and projects before major roadway construction begins</p> <p>Continue to update mitigation strategies as new opportunities and ideas arise</p> <p>Begin utility relocation</p>	<p>Continue implementation of mitigation strategies</p> <p>Test effectiveness of early mitigation measures</p>	<p>Major roadway construction begins</p> <p>Test effectiveness of mitigation strategies</p>
Ongoing public dialogue				

## Contact Us:

- Visit [www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct)
- Email: [viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov)
- Leave a message on the project information line at 206-269-4421
- Write:  
Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall  
Replacement Project  
c/o Washington State Department of Transportation  
999 Third Ave, Suite 2424  
Seattle, WA 98104



## Americans with Disabilities Act & Title VI information

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information:** Materials can be provided in alternative formats: large print, Braille, cassette tape, or on computer disk for people with disabilities by contacting Molly Edmonds at (206) 267-3841 / [EdmondM@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:EdmondM@wsdot.wa.gov). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request for alternative formats through the Washington Relay Service at 7-1-1.

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